

EPA adds former Colorado Smelter site in Pueblo, Colo. to Superfund list

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Today **(date)** the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) added the former Colorado Smelter site in Pueblo, Colo., to the National Priorities List (NPL) of Superfund sites. Superfund is the federal program that investigates and cleans up the most complex, uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites to protect public health and the environment.

“Listing the Colorado Smelter site on the National Priorities List is an important step that enables EPA to secure the necessary resources to investigate and address contamination concerns at this site,” said Shaun McGrath, EPA’s regional administrator. “We look forward to continuing our efforts with the State of Colorado, the City of Pueblo, and our partners in the community to assess and cleanup properties in the area.”

EPA proposed the Colorado Smelter site for addition to the NPL on May 12, 2014 and conducted a 60-day public comment period on the proposal. After reviewing and responding to all comments in a responsiveness summary, EPA has added the site to the NPL.

The former Colorado Smelter site is located within a mixed-use neighborhood near the Arkansas River and Pueblo’s central business district. In 2011, EPA and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) completed a site assessment that found elevated levels of lead and arsenic in residential soils and large slag piles in the vicinity of the site. These results indicated a comprehensive cleanup is necessary to reduce health risks for current and future residents. EPA and CDPHE have been working with city and county officials, community groups, interested stakeholders, and residents to develop information and identify next steps in addressing the contamination.

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), the law establishing the Superfund program, requires EPA to update the NPL at least annually and clean up hazardous waste sites to protect human health with the goal of returning them to productive use. A site’s listing neither imposes a financial obligation on EPA nor assigns liability to any party. Updates to the NPL do, however, provide policymakers with a list of high-priority sites, serving to identify the size and nature of the nation’s cleanup challenges.

The Superfund program has provided important benefits for people and the environment since Congress established the program in 1980. Those benefits are both direct and indirect, and include reduction of threats to human health and ecological systems in the vicinity of Superfund sites, improvement of the economic conditions and quality of life in communities affected by hazardous waste sites, prevention of future releases of hazardous substances, and advances in science and technology.

For more information, visit: <http://www2.epa.gov/region8/colorado-smelter>

